

## Why Non-Profits Should Use Crowdsourcing

Almost every non-profit organization has a mission or purpose to make an impact on the world in some way. **The ability of non-profits to have impact can be dramatically enhanced through crowdsourcing.** Crowdsourcing is a powerful way for non-profits to tap into the collective strength of their stakeholder groups - employees, followers and donors - and allow them to actively participate in furthering the mission of the non-profit.

Crowdsourcing provides an interactive online process, focused on identified objectives, that guides collaboration and innovation, leading to desired input and outcomes.

Non-profits can use crowdsourcing to provide a conduit for innovative ideas from its stakeholder groups, finding solutions for problems commonly encountered, making meetings and conferences more valuable, innovating ways to ensure a successful and growing future, and providing a conduit for fresh ideas into the community. Using crowdsourcing can become a major differentiator for a non-profit and be a visible demonstration of its “leading edge” vision.

Perhaps most importantly, **crowdsourcing help make a non-profit more relevant to its stakeholder groups.** Participants in well-designed crowdsourcing engagements report stronger connection to their organizations as a result of having the opportunity to contribute in a meaningful way.

## How Crowdsourcing works:

Crowdsourcing is a disciplined online process where people who have a common interest or affiliation (such as no-profit employees or followers ) collaborate in an organized and positive way towards accomplishing specific objectives.

There are several different ways of structuring crowdsourcing engagements, but most use online technology and program moderation to guide the crowd through a process of submission, enhancement, review and selection of the best input.

One of the most common methods is a “collaborative” approach that poses questions to the “crowd” and enables people to submit ideas, which other participants can read, comment on, or make further suggestions. In this way, the ideas submitted are improved and enhanced based on the “wisdom of the crowd” (or in other words, the various experiences, knowledge, backgrounds and opinions of the participants). The crowd may be asked to rate submissions, which helps identify submissions the crowd thinks are most viable. These evolved ideas are now available for further consideration and potential implementation by the sponsoring organization. Another method keeps submissions private, but may allow people inside the organization to interact and collaborate with the submitters. This may be used when grants or prizes are to be awarded.

Crowdsourcing can also incorporate other types of online collaborative activities to provide a wider breadth of input and data of real value. Numerous studies show that “crowdsourced” input, ideas and solutions are often superior even to those from panels of experts.

Crowdsourcing engagements may span days, weeks, or months and sometimes evolve into an ongoing dialog to address many different issues and topics over time.

## Applications for Non-Profit Crowdsourcing

There are a variety of ways that non-profit organizations can and should take advantage of the power of crowdsourcing. Specific examples include:

- **Innovation:** Regardless of the mission of a non-profit, new ideas and approaches are always needed, and crowdsourcing provides the best process for allowing members to bring their innovative ideas forward, and have them enhanced and vetted by others.
- **Issue prioritization:** Non-profits typically have many potential issues to address, but focusing on all at once isn't possible. Crowdsourcing provides a more democratic way to establish priorities, and understand *why* they are the top priorities to stakeholders.
- **Understanding Opportunities:** To have impact, a non-profit must understand the key factors at work as clearly as possible. By tapping into the collective knowledge and experience of its stakeholders, crowdsourcing affords a much deeper view of relevant issues for non-profits, resulting in greater clarity.
- **Planning for the future:** No one can predict the future, but crowdsourcing has proven to be one of the most accurate ways to identify what changes may take place, and to position the organization to be out in front of emerging issues.

## How GoodCrowds can help:

The benefits of crowdsourcing can be significant for non-profit organizations, but it takes planning and strategy to do it right. Where is the best place to start? Who are the right participants? What are the right topics? What technology is right for your needs? How long should you engage? What can you expect? What should it cost?

GoodCrowds will work with you to determine the right approach for your organization, and answer all of these questions. We have worked with organizations around the world to conceptualize, design and implement effective crowdsourcing programs, for many different objectives, using many different crowdsourcing methods. We will help ensure that your engagements are successful from the get-go by sharing our knowledge of best practices, and make certain of the best use of your valuable budget.

**For more information, please email [info@goodcrowds.com](mailto:info@goodcrowds.com), or visit [www.goodcrowds.com](http://www.goodcrowds.com)**